THE NAMING COMMISSION RECOMMENDS

Fort Eisenhower

As the new name for Fort Gordon, Georgia

Dwight D. Eisenhower is exemplary amongst his generation in both senses of the word. On the one hand, his story is representative: most Americans from his generation also were workers and witnesses to America's rise from a 19th century nation still closing its western frontier to a 20th century superpower advocating for democracy throughout the world. Yet on the other hand, it is exceptional: few Americans ever played more numerous or central roles in that process than Dwight Eisenhower himself.

National service characterized Eisenhower's career from the moment he entered West Point as a cadet in 1911. Commissioned in 1915, he trained tank crews for service in World War I, and soon thereafter participated in a cross-country automobile expedition across the United States. During the 1920s, he served at the Panama Canal, attended the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College, and worked as a staff officer for many of the nation's leading generals. During the 1930s, he continued to rise in the military, working for Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur. Assigned to the Philippines towards the end of the decade and alarmed by the rise of fascism in Europe and Asia, Eisenhower spent much of this time – as one biographer put it – "preparing for the next war."

That preparation paid off. When that next war came, Eisenhower put all his professional development and diversity of experience to its best possible use, meteorically rising to meet the war's challenges with great military acumen and impressive diplomatic skill. At the outset of 1941, he held the rank of lieutenant colonel, and in February of 1943, was promoted to four-star general, jumping over a host of those more senior. Readying the nation for war as Assistant Chief of Staff for the War Plans Department and the subsequent New Operations Division, he next traveled to the United Kingdom, where he quickly became the U.S. Army's Commanding General in the European Theater of Operations. As the war progressed, Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces in North Africa and the Mediterranean, overseeing the liberation of North Africa and the invasions of Sicily and Italy. His wartime career culminated with his selection as Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces throughout Europe. In this role, Eisenhower led combined ground, air, and sea forces on D-day in the greatest amphibious landing in history, maintaining the assault throughout the subsequent year of fierce fighting.

His combined forces liberated Western Europe and helped defeat Nazi Germany.

After the war, Eisenhower continued to shape the future of the Army and the world, serving as Military Governor of the U.S. Occupation Zone of Germany, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, and first Supreme Allied Commander Europe for NATO. Elected President of the United States in 1952 and re-elected in 1956, Eisenhower forged a moderate path that oversaw eight years of national prosperity at home and relative peace abroad in the emerging Cold War. Relying on his military experience and diplomatic skill, he strengthened American allies and avoided direct military confrontations. At the end of his presidency in 1961, he retired from public service – exactly 50 years after entering it at West Point.

Starting as a second lieutenant and rising all the way to Commander-in-Chief, Dwight Eisenhower's extensive, innovative, and effective military experience and leadership shaped our modern world. His career demonstrated superlative devotion to duty, executing those duties with an eye on history and personal experience adapted to new circumstances. Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's career continues to serve as an example and inspiration for the present and future soldiers of the Army he so faithfully served and so decisively led.